

Reclamation, in conjunction with Ecology, has proposed to implement a water exchange program and complete a federal contract for storage and delivery of water to provide a reliable source of water for domestic and municipal junior water right holders in the Yakima basin. The contract will allow Ecology to purchase or lease up to 1000 acre-feet of senior water rights in the Yakima and Naches basins that may be transferred into the State Trust Water Right Program and

then issued to existing or new junior water right holders. The distribution of acquired water to be stored in Reclamation reservoirs is unknown. However, the cumulative amount of water to be stored will not exceed the 1000 acre-foot contract limit among all five reservoirs.

Reclamation will release up to 1000 acre-feet of stored water from the five storage reservoirs to deliver water to users that have been issued new water right permits by Ecology under this exchange contract. Water releases from storage reservoirs will be made to offset diversions made by water right holders that divert directly from waterbodies associated with mainstem or tributary river reaches that are located below storage reservoirs. Storage releases to compensate for water diversions would likely occur in late summer through winter of each year. However, water releases may be required on a year-round basis to accommodate water users with year-round domestic water rights.

The Project BA describes effects that are either extremely unlikely to occur and/or are very small in scale. The Service agrees that implementation of the Project will result in discountable and insignificant effects to individuals and the habitats of the species named above. Therefore, the Service concurs with your determination of "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" bull trout and its designated critical habitat based on the information included in the BA. Our concurrence is conditioned on the Project being implemented as described in the BA.

This concludes informal consultation pursuant to the regulations implementing the Act, 50 C.F.R. § 402.13. This Project should be reanalyzed if new information reveals effects of the action may affect listed or proposed species or designated or proposed critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not considered in this consultation; if the action is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect to a listed or proposed species or designated or proposed critical habitat that was not considered in this consultation; and/or, if a new species is listed or critical habitat is designated that may be affected by this Project.

Thank you for your assistance in the conservation of listed species. If you have any questions or comments regarding this letter, please contact Gregg Kurz at the Central Washington Field Office in Wenatchee at (509)665-3508, extension 22, or via e-mail at Gregg_Kurz@fws.gov.